

UK National Hydrometric Data Archives: Vision Statement & UK Surface And Groundwater Archives (SAGA) Committee: Terms of Reference

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1. Definitions

1.1. For the purpose of the National Hydrometric Data Archives' Vision Statement and the Surface And Groundwater Archives (SAGA) Committee's Terms of Reference, the following definitions shall be used:

1.1.1. Measuring Authorities: Organisations who operate national-scale hydrological surface (river flow) and groundwater monitoring networks in the UK.

1.1.2. National Hydrometric Data Archives: The UK's National River Flow Archive (NRFA) and the National Groundwater Level Archive (NGLA).

1.1.3. Users: All those who access the information provided by the National Hydrometric Data Archives, including for activities that support economic development and social well-being.

1.1.4. Hydrological data: References to hydrological data include hydrogeological data.

2. Background

2.1. When the National Hydrometric Data Archives were transferred from the then Department of Environment (DoE) to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) in 1982, the SAGA Committee was formed.

2.2. The requirement for a liaison committee to consider the needs of Government Departments and the water industry with respect to water quantity, was stipulated in the 1982 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UK Government and the devolved administrations and NERC.

2.3. The MoU was revised in September 2002.

2.4. In 2021, the SAGA Committee discussed and agreed on the establishment of a Vision Statement for the National Hydrometric Data Archives.

2.5. In 2022 the MoU was amended and signed again, to update the Parties involved and to modify the Schedule which sets out the services provided to the users.

3. Vision (of the National Hydrometric Data Archives)

3.1. Users (for example, researchers, the water industry, environmental regulators, consultancies, non-governmental organisations, the media, the public, UK Government and international organisations) demand high quality hydrological and hydrogeological data, information and expertise. This underpins future hydrological research, policy development and water management as we face the twin challenges of climate change and population growth. The UK National Hydrometric Data Archives aim to meet that demand. To help achieve this, the Archives will:

- 3.1.1. [Act as the main focal point for hydrometric data](#) in the UK, [providing stewardship of](#) daily, monthly and flood peak river flow [data](#) from over 1,600 gauging stations across the UK and groundwater level data from around 200 borehole sites chosen to represent all major UK aquifers, being in zones least affected by substantial abstraction.
- 3.1.2. [Support the hydrometric monitoring activities of the Measuring Authorities by offering independent, authoritative commentary](#) on issues related to river flow measurement and groundwater level data.
- 3.1.3. [Support the real, pressing & growing needs of users](#) across the UK and internationally [by providing free access to](#) essential national, regional and site-specific historic and real-time [data](#) along with complementary context, catchment and other metadata.
- 3.1.4. [Develop data quality control methods and real-time data access tools to ensure the best available data are made accessible](#) to our users.
- 3.1.5. [Conduct a wide range of analyses to exploit their data holdings](#) and document contemporary hydrological conditions, to undertake network appraisals and to identify and interpret long-term hydrological change and variability via publications such as the monthly Hydrological Summaries and articles in the peer-reviewed literature.
- 3.1.6. [Undertake outreach activities to raise awareness of their data](#), increase their visibility and their value.
- 3.1.7. [Engage with the SAGA Committee, partners and users to build networks and strong long-lasting relationships.](#)
- 3.1.8. [Encourage Measuring Authorities to develop an understanding of the common and different data users, uses and data needs](#), current, emerging and future.

4. Terms of Reference (of the SAGA Committee)

4.1. The SAGA Committee has the following aims. The Committee shall:

- 4.1.1. Promote the ongoing stewardship and use of the National Hydrometric Data Archives.
- 4.1.2. Provide a forum for liaison between the different stakeholders involved in UK hydrometric data collection, archival and dissemination.
- 4.1.3. Champion the need to ensure the capability of the existing public (and private) monitoring networks and data archives across the UK meet the needs of the users.
- 4.1.4. Provide mutual support to Measuring Authorities and the National Hydrometric Data Archives in maintaining and developing monitoring networks and data archives that ensure appropriate and representative data for the UK are protected for national public good.
- 4.1.5. Review the stewardship activities of the NRFA and the NGLA and recent operational developments in the Measuring Authorities. It shall make suggestions for future activities.
- 4.1.6. Communicate the work and outputs of the Committee amongst their organisations and funding bodies.

5. Structure

- 5.1. The Committee shall have a Chair who will normally rotate on a three year cycle.
- 5.2. The Secretary shall be provided by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology who shall organise the meetings, distribute the papers and prepare the minutes.

6. Membership

- 6.1. The Committee membership shall be drawn from those bodies with a major stake in UK hydrometric monitoring.
- 6.2. The membership shall include representatives of those organisations who operate and fund the NRFA / NGLA, currently the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the British Geological Survey and NERC.
- 6.3. The membership shall normally include one representative of the relevant departments of UK and devolved Governments, currently the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government.

6.4. The membership shall include one representative of each Measuring Authority.

6.5. The membership shall include representatives of one or more organisations invited by the Committee to represent the needs of data users (for example from a specific sector or geographical region).

6.6. A record of the membership shall be held by the Committee Secretary.

7. Meetings

7.1. The Committee shall meet once a year, generally on the first Wednesday of March.

7.2. Minutes of the meetings will be made available to all members following the meeting.

8. Review of Terms of Reference and Membership

8.1. The Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually by the Committee.

8.2. The Membership of the Committee should be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to reflect the bodies who have a major stake in UK hydrometric monitoring and changing user needs.

9. Associated Documents

9.1. The following documents are cited in these Terms of Reference. Copies can be sourced from the Committee Secretary.

- Current Committee Membership List
- Memorandum of Understanding 1982
- Memorandum of Understanding 2002
- Memorandum of Understanding 2022